

Georgia Wheel of Fortune Cancellation

By Larry L. Rausch

In 1880, the F.P. Hammond Co. of Aurora, Illinois introduced the cancel shown in *Figure 1*. Today this fancy rubber canceller is called Wheel of Fortune (WOF). The highly detailed stamper was made possible with the invention of vulcanized rubber. The Peerless Vulcanizer shown on the 1898 cover below in *Figure 2* may have been the type of machine to make the Wheel of Fortune device.



Figure 1. Wheel of Fortune cancel.

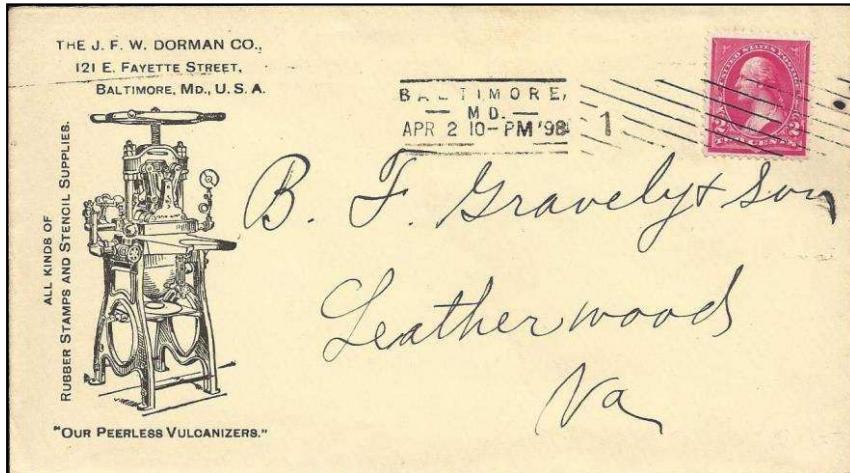


Figure 2. The "Peerless Vulcanizer" illustrated on cover.

The first advertisement for the WOF appeared in the January 1881 U.S. Official Postal Guide (*Figure 3*). In the advertisement under "Best Offer", this canceller and kit cost \$3.00.



Figure 3. U.S. Official Postal Guide ad for the WOF cancel.

Although this ad depicts postmarks dating in the 1870s, the earliest WOF postmark found to date is February 26, 1880 from New Lisbon, Wisconsin. The earliest from Georgia is dated January 08, 1883 from Camilla, Georgia (*Figure 4*).



Figure 4. Camilla, Georgia WOF cancel.

Wheel of Fortune cancels/killers were generally used in conjunction (as a duplex) with town postmarks, as shown in **Figure 5**, Types 1 through 6.

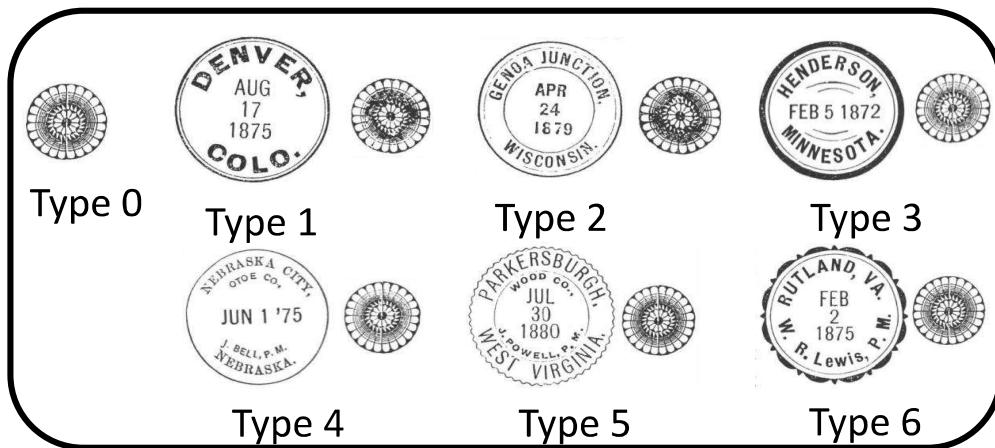


Figure 5. WOF Types.

The WOF is also known stand-alone as well, Type 0, as shown in the Heilig's Mill, N.C. cover (**Figure. 6**). No Type 0 Georgia covers have been reported.



Figure 6. Heilig's Mill, N.C. Type 0 WOF cancel.

Various cancels available in the same era are commonly mistaken for the Wheel of Fortune marking. The Wheel can be readily distinguished given its 24 segments, unlike the cancels shown in **Figure 7**.



Figure 7. Cancels mistaken for the Wheel of Fortune cancel.

Nine towns in Georgia are known to have used the Wheel of Fortune cancel (**Figure 8**).

count		Town	Have Photo	Usage Range	type	County	Cover Date
1	GA	Bellton	p	1887	5	Hall County	87-5-23
2	GA	Camilla	p	1883	2	Mitchell County	83-01-08
3	GA	Dublin				Laurens County	
4	GA	Forsyth				Monroe County	
5	GA	Griffin				Spalding County	
6	GA	Lumber City	p	1884	1	Telfair County	84-3-10
7	GA	Martin	p	xx	2	Stephens and Franklin County	xx-11-13
8	GA	Minnie	p	xx	3	Irwin County	xx-5-21
9	GA	Ringgold				Catoosa County	

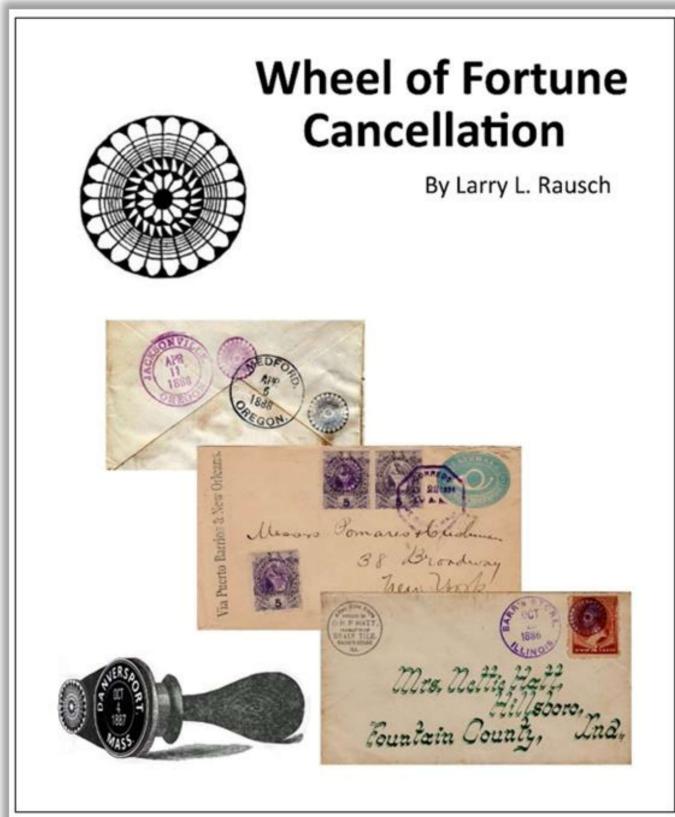
Figure 8. Georgia Wheel of Fortune cancels.

Wheel of Fortune cancels for Belton, Lumber City, Martin and Minnie, Georgia are shown in **Figure 9**.



Figure 9. WOF cancels: Belton, Lumber City, Martin and Minnie, Georgia.

Editor's Note: In November 2019, Larry Rausch published an outstanding monograph devoted to the Wheel of Fortune cancellation. State-specific content from the book has been published in several postal history journals, as with this issue of *Georgia Post Roads*.



The book features 136 color pages in an 8.5 x 11 format. A spiral bound printed book is available at stonywoods840@gmail.com. Generously offered by Larry is a free download of the book at www.rpastamps.org/wof.html.

In his continuing research and recording of WOF cancels, Larry asks that you contact him regarding covers that he has not identified and forward photo scans of those covers to him at stonywoods840@gmail.com. All state towns and duplicates would also be appreciated.



Doremus Machine Cancels of Georgia

By Tony L. Crumbley

William D. Doremus founded the Doremus Machine Company in Washington, DC in the late 1890s. He began fulfilling cancelling machine orders to the Post Office Department in January 1900. The earliest Doremus trial mark is dated December 30, 1899 from Bayonne, New Jersey. The first machines were made near there by Garvin Machine Co. The earliest recorded Georgia Doremus cancel is Brunswick, Georgia in 1901.

About a dozen towns received Doremus machines in January 1900. More and more towns received Doremus machines as fast as they could be built in the following months. The Doremus machines were purchased outright by the Post Office Department. They were not rented by the post office as most other machines were. Their purchase was possible because the Doremus machine was a very simple device that was hand powered.

The hand-powered feature was a critical component of the Post Office Department's decision to purchase Doremus machines. As explained in the *Annual Reports of the Post Office Department, Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1899*, "...the latter (Doremus machines) are of the automatic hand-power type, and their successful operation has vindicated the wisdom of Congress. Many towns and villages of considerable size and importance do not have electrical current available during daylight hours, and these places have heretofore been denied the use of a canceling machine."